

For Immediate Release

November 6, 2006

600-Plus Attend 'Night to Remember'

NASHVILLE, TN—More than 600 Free Will Baptist Bible College alumni gathered at The Factory in Franklin, Tennessee, on Saturday night, November 4, for a first-of-its-kind unscripted evening called *A Night to Remember*.

Event organizer Bob Bass told attendees, "Tonight is about one thing—relationships. We came here tonight because back through the years we all were at a place where relationships mattered."

The casual, laughter-filled alumni represented students from every decade from the 1940s to the 2000s. Silver-haired alumni in their 80s rubbed shoulders with energetic alumni in their mid-20s for four hours Saturday evening.

President Matt Pinson said, "*A Night to Remember* was a great evening of reconnecting with friends I hadn't seen in years and alumni from different generations—and connecting for the first time with many alumni from years gone by. The food was fabulous. The fellowship with old friends was even better."

The event came across exactly as advertised online and in *ONE Magazine*—no appeals for money, no pressure by officials for support during upcoming relocation efforts, no formal program, and everything was free.

Tom Sass, vice president for financial affairs at FWBBC, said, "This may have been the largest gathering of Free Will Baptist Bible College alumni in the history of the school."

The evening began with attendees arriving in waves between 4:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m., slapping stick-on name tags to lapels, and getting reacquainted with the people who had influenced their lives the most. After a 6:00 p.m. meal, the happy crowd sitting at rounds of eight in the mega-structure that was at one time a stove manufacturing

company, began raising the noise level, swapping stories, and catching up on what had happened since graduation.

Dr. Neil Gilliland, director of member care at Free Will Baptist International Missions and one of numerous alumni present, thanked the alumni for coming, recognized the sponsors, and said, “The rest of the program is you. No sermons. No offerings. This is all about you. Enjoy the evening with your friends.”

Alumni from 16 states were on hand. They came from as far away as Florida and New Jersey, from Virginia and Oklahoma, from Michigan and Alabama. Everybody was at ease, and nobody brought an agenda.

Maurilio Amorim, alumni sponsor and founder of the A-Group in Nashville, praised Board of Trustee member Bob Bass for his vision to make the *Night to Remember* possible. “I have the gift of encouragement,” Maurilio said with a straight face, “so when Bob told me his plans for this evening, I told him ‘Don’t do it! It will never work!’ But it did work, and we are all here.”

One unexpected highlight involved dozens of eight-foot tables surrounding the tri-level dining areas, and covered with pictures of every freshman class at FWBBC since 1942. As alumni arrived and picked up name tags, they invariably spent time browsing the tables searching for that special class they started with at FWBBC back in....

The *Night to Remember* became what Bob Bass envisioned three years earlier when he began making plans—an extended homecoming for FWBBC.

Bass said, “I rented this place over a year ago, long before there was land for sale or a relocation plan on the table. I wanted it to be a time of healing and reconnecting with friends.”

A Night to Remember was sponsored entirely by interested alumni. It was open to alumni, faculty, staff, and Board of Trustee members who have been affiliated with FWBBC since 1942.

Russell Cooper, assistant director for institutional advancement at FWBBC said,
“This is the event of the year.”